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Approved For Release 2002/01/24 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100090011-5

NEAC 5200-78

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Executive Registry

78-6778

20 November 1978

National Intelligence Officers

SIGNATURE

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center
FROM: [REDACTED]
National Intelligence Officer for China
SUBJECT: Memorandum for Dr. Brzezinski on the Chinese Attitude Toward US-Vietnamese Relations

1. Action Requested: That you forward the attached memorandum to Dr. Brzezinski on 20 November.

2. Background: Dr. Brzezinski asked you for a memo by CIA on Chinese reaction to any improvement in US-Vietnamese relations including normalization of US/SRV relations. He asked for this by early this week. This memo is in response to that request.

3. Recommendation: That you sign this memorandum.



Attachment:
Memorandum

cc: DDCI

APPROVED:

See 21 Nov. 78 Memo.
DCI

Date

DISAPPROVED:

DCI

Date

25X1A

E2. IMPDET
CL BY 57050

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APPROVED:

See ER 78-6770/A, attached

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25X1A NIO/CH-JRLilley:fmt [REDACTED] 18 November 1978

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ER
Executive Registry

Office of the Director

21 NOV 1978

71-6770/A

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Chinese Attitude Towards
US-Vietnamese Relations

1. Recent comments by top Chinese officials indicate that Peking's opposition to the normalization or improvement of relations between the US and Vietnam is growing. From the end of the Indochina war until early this year, the Chinese appeared to support US-Vietnamese normalization in the hope that it would counter growing Soviet influence in Hanoi. As the dispute between China and Vietnam escalated this summer, however, some Chinese officials began to convey different signals. Since last August, comments on US-Vietnamese normalization have been generally negative. This shift over time in China's position clearly reflects Peking's growing belief that Hanoi had embarked on a course totally opposed to Peking's. Vietnam's entry into CEMA, its military actions in Kampuchea, the dispute over ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and finally the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty of friendship and cooperation are the outstanding benchmarks. If there had been any doubts in Peking that Vietnam's ties were strengthening with the USSR, the treaty dispelled them. Shortly after the treaty was signed, China's news agency took the unusual step of publishing Li Hsien-nien's attacks on Vietnam during talks with American guests. The citation of Li's comments at this time was probably intended to convey Chinese displeasure over the possibility of normalization. On 3 November, Li had also raised the subject of normalization in a conversation with Secretary Schlesinger. He recited in an irritated fashion China's belief that it is no use trying to draw Vietnam economically or politically away from the USSR.

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25X1C 2. Senior Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping told [REDACTED] that US-Vietnamese normalization is "not a big problem at all" and that it is "inevitable" because "it is the right thing to do." Having conceded this point, however, Teng went on to speak forcefully against the argument that US influence in Hanoi might offset Soviet influence there: "It is delusory to think that the establishment of diplomatic relations will extract Vietnam from the influence of the Soviet Union, and it would be impossible for the US to use economic aid to Vietnam to lure Vietnam away from the Soviet Union."

3. Chinese officials in fact have returned to the theme of US economic assistance to Vietnam almost every time they have discussed the question of US-Vietnam normalization. Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien also recently argued vehemently against US economic aid, asserting that it would relieve the Soviet Union of a "great burden" while having no effect on Vietnam's close ties to the USSR.

4. When China's officials speak of economic assistance, they consistently cite their own record of aid to Hanoi and claim that even their "\$20 billion" was not enough to check Hanoi's gravitation to Moscow. The fact that they link economic assistance with their own experience in Vietnam springs from concern that western economic assistance to Vietnam will be at cross-purposes with China's own termination of aid to Vietnam. The Chinese prefer to let the Vietnamese stew in their Soviet juice.

25X1C [REDACTED] Chinese policy is to force Vietnam into near-total reliance on the USSR and then trust that -- as in the cases of China, Egypt and the Sudan -- frictions between Hanoi and Moscow will inevitably develop over the next eight or ten years, after which China will again attempt to build influence in Vietnam. Aid to Vietnam, [REDACTED] "would be like assisting the Soviet Union in dominating Asia."

25X1C 5. Despite Secretary Vance's 3 November press conference announcement that there are some indications Vietnam may drop the economic preconditions to normalization, Chinese officials continue to associate normalization with aid. The vague fashion in which the Chinese have referred to aid suggests concern that normalization would bring other economic benefits to Vietnam beyond conventional economic assistance, such as increased trade and greater access to technology.

6. In addition to complicating its campaign against Vietnam, Peking also is disturbed that normalized US-Vietnam ties would be viewed as taking sides against Kampuchea. Teng Hsiao-ping and Li Hsien-nien have recently linked the question of US relations with Vietnam to the American attitude toward Kampuchea. Teng said: "During my visit to Japan, I proposed that Japan improve its relations with Kampuchea. The US does not understand the problem. It only looks at Kampuchea's past. I have talked with the Americans, and proposed that the US provide moral support to Kampuchea." Teng then directly proceeded to discuss the question of US-Vietnamese normalization. Similarly, Li Hsien-nien told an American group last week that he hoped the "US would not continue to make an issue of the so-called human rights question as that would provide a further handicap to Phnom Penh" in its fight against the more powerful Vietnamese.

7. Peking is in no position to attack US-Vietnam normalization in principle and in fact has carefully avoided taking such a position. Outright or formal objection would stand in stark contrast to earlier expressions of support for normal relations between the two countries and would contradict Peking's "principled" support for diplomatic relations among all countries.

8. Disappointment over US normalization with Vietnam at this time could provide ammunition to those in China who might eventually oppose China's opening to the US. We nevertheless have no evidence that serious opposition to this policy has developed, and in fact China's compelling interest in economic, scientific and technological links to the US would impose limits on any negative Chinese reaction. In short, we believe the bilateral relationship would continue to move ahead. But, US recognition of Vietnam clearly would chill the climate of the relationship and would be seen in Peking as inconsistent with the development of a cooperative, strategic link between China and the US.

9. In this latter regard, the timing of any US move to recognize Vietnam would be instrumental in determining the depth of Chinese displeasure. US-Vietnam normalization in the immediate aftermath of the recently concluded treaty between Vietnam and Moscow, and amidst indications of a new round of Vietnamese military action in Kampuchea would almost certainly be construed by Peking at best as US indifference to fundamental Chinese interests and policies in Southeast Asia. In the event that the situation in Indo-China finds its own level and the

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threat to the Kampuchean regime lessens in Chinese eyes, Peking may find it less difficult to swallow US-Vietnamese normalization. On the other hand, if the situation in Indo-China worsens dramatically in the next months, Peking's opposition to normalized US-Vietnam relations can be expected to intensify.

/s/ Stansfield Turner

STANSFIELD TURNER

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22 Nov 78

Signed by DCI on 21 Nov 78 - Delivered to
Brzezinski by DCI on same date.



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